

THE QUALITY OF THE RURAL POPULATION

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"Writing and ploughing are two different talents; and he that writes well must have spent in his study that time which is necessary to be in the fields by him who will be master of the art of cultivating them."—JETHRO TULL (1674-1741).

INTRODUCTION

NO easy generalizations can be made about such an infinitely varied group as the rural population of the British Isles. Our cities have been built up by people who were originally country folk. What are those still living, or coming back to live, in the country like in comparison with country-dwellers of the past and with town-dwellers of to-day, and why are they important? This paper seeks to clarify some aspects of the first question and to answer the second. The field to be surveyed is vast, both in Britain and in America. Some of the studies of the physical and mental qualities of rural people in both countries will be summarized, and their implications discussed, in the hope of stimulating further research.

Food and the Rural Population

We have become so accustomed to thinking of ourselves as an industrial nation, living within an Atlantic civilization which is about three-quarters urban, that we tend to forget what this implies. Dr. Parkes reminded us in the Galton Lecture this year that our position in relation to the world food situation may become precarious, and Dr. Julian Huxley sounded a similar warning in March.* We are importing more than 60 per cent of our food now, though during the war it was less by calories (57 per cent. in 1943) and

much less by weight.* Our food problem is part of our rural population problem. If we lived in a rational world, with real free trade and international or supra-national law it would be possible to support our 49-odd million people—about 43 million of whom live in towns—in comfort, with a maximum of industrial production and of food importation. But we do not live in such a world; the "if" is too large, and sooner or later we must face it. In the terse words of Sir Charles Arden-Close:† "We have some 49 million people to feed, and shall find it difficult to feed them."

The quality of our rural population will become of increasing importance as the realization of this hard fact sinks in. The health, intelligence and character of the people who deal with the soil of Britain, and all the others who make up rural society, may have even more bearing on our survival than the quality of our miners and industrial workers, our scientists and our statesmen. The query "What is a desirable density for Britain's population?" springs immediately to mind, and, linked with it, the question of planned immigration and emigration, but these vast issues cannot be dealt with here.

Rural Decline and Recuperation

The exodus from the countryside of Britain reached its peak at the end of the nineteenth

* Speech at the Association of Scientific Workers, March 4th, 1950.

* Paper read by Dr. K. G. Fenelon to the British Association, Section F, Economics and Statistics, Newcastle-on-Tyne, September 1949.

† Cf. Arden-Close (1948).

century and led many to predict (especially after the first world war) that our rural population would become derelict. These jeremiads have not come true and the time is ripe for a re-appraisal of the situation. Since roughly 1880, when the importation of grain and meat from overseas impoverished British agriculture, until the 1930's, the morale of the rural community has been low. What this "rural exodus" has meant in terms of human suffering no one can tell. Since the 1930's, however, strong recuperative forces have been at work, forces starting at the "grassroots," but also strengthened from the cities. Not only the Ministries of Agriculture, of Town and Country Planning, of Education and of Health, but also Churchmen, professional and business men and many private organizations are working to strengthen these new forces.* The success of this process of recovery depends largely on the quality of the people who live in our countryside.

Other Countries

How long have we been an urban nation, and how do we compare with the rest of the world? The answer is that we are the most urban nation in the world. The two charts below will help to make this clear. Table I shows the percentages of the total populations of various countries which are engaged in agriculture. Crude birth-rates for 1948 are also given, although this is later than the dates of most of the agricultural percentages.

We all know of the association of falling birth-rate with rising urbanization,† but, as we see in the figures for Czechoslovakia and the United States, it is not a perfect correlation. (Both these countries have fairly high birth-rates for 1948, though they are more than two-thirds urban, but this is probably due to the post-war "boom in babies.")

* These "forces" began before the first world war. Cf. Fordham (1916) and Holdenby (1913) in their concluding chapters.

† Cf. Blacker (1947) and Chandrasekhar (1949). For India the figures are roughly 80 per cent. engaged in agriculture, and an estimated crude birth-rate of 45 for the decade 1931-41.

TABLE I
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE

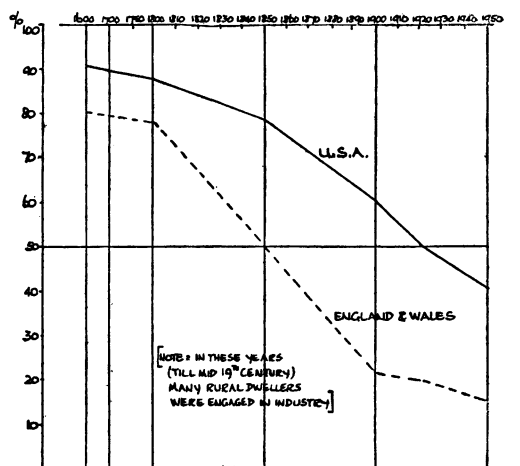
COUNTRY:	PER CENT:	BIRTH RATE, 1948:
RUSSIA IN EUROPE (1926)	84.9%	23.0
CHINA (average of 1945)	62.4%	21.6
SPAIN (1920)	56.1%	18.4
ITALY (1931)	47.3%	20.8
SWEDEN (1920)	40.7%	15.9
FRANCE (1926)	38.3%	23.4
GERMANY (1933)	28.9%	19.0
CZECHOSLOVAKIA (1930)	28.3%	17.3
SWITZERLAND (1930)	28.3%	24.4
BELGIUM (1920)	19.1%	18.1
U.S.A. (1948)	16.0%	
ENGLAND & WALES (1931)	6.4%	

SOURCES: CARR-SAUNDERS, A. M. "WORLD POPULATION" p. 141. 1936.
KIRK, DUDLEY. "EUROPE'S POPULATION IN THE INTER-WAR YEARS". LEAGUE OF NATIONS, 1946.
TA CHEN. "POPULATION IN MODERN CHINA". UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, 1946.

The Past in Britain

Table II shows, very roughly, the change from rural to urban life in England and the United States:

TABLE II
ROUGH PERCENTAGE OF RURAL TO TOTAL POPULATION



SOURCES: TREVELYAN, G. M. "ENGLISH SOCIAL HISTORY" p. 11, 303, 327; KEATINGE, G. E. LITTLEWOOD, R. "THE AGRICULTURAL WORKER" THE LANCET, 21.2.48; ALSO, HARRINGTON, R. "THE RURAL REVOLUTION" 1960.

The biggest change comes, as we should expect, in the century after 1790, when the industrial revolution was in full swing. But it is interesting to note that even before the eighteenth century, when the agricultural revolution transformed rural England, the drift from the countryside had begun. (The

rural population is, of course, not the same as the agricultural population, the proportions varying widely at different periods.)

As early as 1662 Graunt thought that London needed a "continuous recruitment from the country" to keep its population from being decimated by disease. "The strength of the country is driven . . . to be wasted, into towns" laments another writer of the seventeenth century.* Trevelyan (1944) ascribes this partly to the growth of industry and commerce in the seventeenth century, partly to the better roads. He quotes Arthur Young as deploring this rural exodus :

It is . . . a fact that . . . expeditious travelling depopulates the Kingdom ; young men and women in the country villages fix their eyes on London . . . The numbers who have seen London are increased tenfold, and of course ten times the boasts are sounded in the ears of country fools to induce them to quit their healthy clean fields for regions of dirt, stink and noise.—*Farmer's Letters* (Ed. 1771, p. 353).

Young implies that it is the fools who leave the countryside, an assumption with which many of us might agree, but which is disproved by much of the evidence. It is only too true that many of the intelligent and ambitious sons and daughters flocked to the towns. The bad cottages at home, bad even when compared with ancient city slums, the higher town wages and better prospects of advancement were having their effect even then.

The Real Issue

The essential question is whether the townward movement has been selective genetically ; whether it has permanently lowered the level of country people's inherited ability, both mental and physical ; or whether the family strains in the countryside have been strong enough to bear this " demographic hæmorrhage."† This is *the* fundamental issue and there is as yet no adequate answer. Most observers find rural ability

lower than urban, but to-day they are more cautious about drawing conclusions than they were a decade ago. They can be divided into those who support the theory of selective migration, that the towns have taken the best, and those who think the migration has been non-selective. Before discussing these questions in more detail, as to physical and mental quality, we will briefly survey some past opinions.

Selective Migration ?

It is undoubtedly true that in certain areas the migration *has* been selective. The Census Report for 1881 states that

The industrial centres attract from the rural districts those who are comparatively strong in mind and body ; and the children born to these stronger parents are less liable to congenital deficiencies than the offspring of the comparatively feeble parents, mentally and physically, who are left behind.—1881 Census, G.R. (p. 71).

In 1906 the Board of Agriculture, in its Report on the Decline in the Agricultural Population, found that the " young smart men were leaving country pursuits." Farmer witnesses to commission after commission have complained of the deterioration of their farm workers, and similar complaints are frequently heard to-day. The movement reached its peak around 1880, and is described as a " tremendous social disaster " by Trevelyan : " The vitality of the village slowly declined, as the city in a hundred ways sucked away its blood and brains."* The important inquiry into migration by Dr. Hill (1925) presented much evidence that the pick of the countryside—" some of our best and youngest men " were leaving. The Report of the Mental Deficiency Committee (1929, Part IV), to which I shall refer later, found " at least a partial explanation " of the inbreeding of inferior families in the theory of selective migration. Some American investigators, especially before the 'thirties, also supported the selective migration theory.†

* Dr. Pennecuk's editor (1815).

† Tricart (1949) describes the depopulation around Vezelay (Yonne) as " L'hémorragie démographique." The emigration has deprived the countryside of its élite. Those remaining are often incapable of reading : " Un appauvrissement humain, en quantité et en qualité."

* *Op. cit.*, p. 474.

† E. G. Pintner (1917) concluded that the more intelligent families were leaving the villages. Pyle and Collings (1918) thought that city environment hastened development, and that the city children were of better stock. See also other references in Shimberg (1929) pp. 43 and 46.

Non-selective Migration ?

One of the first of those who did not fully accept selective migration was Charles Booth. Although he said in his famous survey that London was "kept up in bone and sinew and energy by the country element pouring in . . . afterwards to be transformed into waste," he also thought that the countryside sent its "dregs" cityward as well as its "cream." Davies (1931), writing of the rural population between 1871 and 1928 in the most detailed survey yet made in Britain, says :

Very probably the migration movement may be led by the most enterprising . . . natives ; . . . but very probably, also, it includes a large body of followers—people who move to the towns into situations found for them by their friends and relatives who have gone before—and these followers are not inherently likely to be more enterprising or of higher mental quality than those who remain. . . . There are also those of definitely inferior quality—the vagrants and "social wreckage of the province"—who drift . . . to the towns.—(p. 167).

Most American experts now seem to favour the non-selective theory of migration. Zimmerman (1930) writes that the best families *and the poorest* are the most likely to migrate from American farms to the cities. Klineberg (1938) thinks that the existing evidence does not justify broad generalizations about the selection of intelligence in population movements. Gist (1943), writing in Missouri, concludes :

If cities are selective of intelligence, sex and age, may they not likewise be selective of the emotionally unstable, the restless, the romantic, the delinquent ? It is possible also that farms and villages are more attractive than cities to persons who are emotionally stable, content, unimaginative and home-loving.—(p. 154).

One of the doughtiest champions of the non-selective theory in England is Professor A. W. Ashby. He shows convincingly (Ashby, 1935) that "too many general theories have been built on local information," and concludes that

Migration has not been sufficiently selective, except possibly in a few isolated areas, to lower the general physical or mental capacities or qualities of the rural population as compared with those of the past or the urban population of the present time.—(p. 9)

PHYSICAL QUALITY

Before proceeding with an examination of more detailed studies of physical quality let us look at actual numbers. The rural population in 1921 was about 8 million, and now it is somewhere around 6½ million.* Professor Stamp (1949) classifies the rural population as : (1) Primary (farmers and farm workers) ; (2) Secondary (middlemen and professional workers) ; and (3) Adventitious (retired people and town workers living in the country). The primary farming population is slightly larger than the secondary (counting dependants, the two groups can be roughly estimated as just over and just under 3 million each). The third group, people who live in the country but are either retired or else work in nearby towns is far smaller as yet ; but in many areas it is increasing, and its influence is greater than its numbers would suggest.

Professor Stamp shows that the primary rural population (farmers and farm workers) dropped from 92 per square mile of cultivated land in 1871 to 50 per square mile in 1941. The number of actual farmers has remained practically stationary (the 1941 Farm Survey gives it as 215,900), so it is among the farm-workers that the decrease has occurred. Lord Addison (1939) writes : "Where there were 100 employed who were under 21 in 1921, there were only 73 in 1931, and the figure has become smaller since then." The average rural parish of to-day numbers 400, whereas in 1871 it was 720. We must remember that this reflects, to some extent, an increased efficiency in agriculture due to mechanization. The question arises, what is a desirable density in rural areas ?

Fertility

While the main reasons for the shrinking of the rural population during the last

* See Report of the Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas (1942), also Tilley (1947). The term "rural" is taken to mean, in Britain, a district termed "rural" under local government classification, though this may be inaccurate in the case of mining or sub-urban communities. In the United States "rural" usually means a community of under 2,500, but the distinction between a farming area and a village or small-town area is usually made.

seventy years are, first, migration to cities and abroad, and second, the swallowing up of rural districts by urban and suburban development,* the natural rate of increase must be studied by all who are concerned with eugenics. Actually the crude figures show consistently lower figures for rural than for urban birth-rates, as we see in Table IV. We can get a more accurate picture, however, by comparing urban and rural birth-rates per thousand women of child-bearing age. This takes into consideration the fact that rural districts have many fewer women and some fewer men between the ages of 20 and 39 than urban districts.† Davies (1931) gives a table showing the birth-rate per thousand females aged 15-45 from 1870 to 1921, as follows :

			Rural	Urban
1870	158.9	143.1
1921	91.5	86.2
(Op. cit., p. 101.)				

The fertility-rate of rural women was thus 15.8 higher than that of urban women in 1870, and 5.3 higher in 1921. In the decade between 1921-31, according to Innes (1941) the decrease in the birth-rate was 21 per cent for agricultural labourers as compared with 43 per cent for semi-skilled textile workers and 50 per cent for semi-skilled miners. This decrease in fertility among rural women is due partly to the average age being higher and partly to the increased urbanization of many rural districts, which undoubtedly means more use of contraceptives.‡

The Federation of Women's Institutes, in their memorandum to the Scott Committee, stressed the rural housing shortage as an indirect cause of the falling birth-rate. Other

reasons which would repay study are the change in "fashion" as to family size, (perhaps more marked in the remoter country districts, where families used to be the largest) and the increasing age at marriage. Further factors which affect the rural birth-rate are the difficulties in arranging for the actual birth and the shortage of help in the home. There is more neighbourliness in the rural than in the urban community, but to-day the village, like the town, is feeling the shortage of "aunties" who used to be so freely available in emergencies. Home-help schemes are beginning in the rural districts, but so far are merely a drop in the bucket.

To summarize this cursory survey of rural fertility : Despite the more rapid decrease in fertility of rural women between 1870 and 1921, so great was their lead in the past that they remained ahead of the urban women. In the decade between 1921-31 the rural birth-rate continued to decline, but less than half as fast as the decline among miners and textile workers. There would therefore seem to be a higher effective fertility among rural women than among urban.

Mortality

Death-rates might be regarded as a more reliable index of physical quality than birth-rates. Davies* gives a table of death-rates by which he figures, for 1926, a death-rate of 10.58 per thousand for urban districts, and 8.35 per thousand for rural. Martin (1949) also demonstrates from a ratio of actual deaths to expected deaths for males in 1930-2, a "progressive increase in mortality with urbanization." All this would not seem to point to degeneration in the physical quality of the rural population. Figures for deaths from heart diseases, cancer, strokes, pneumonia and respiratory tuberculosis are all lower for the agricultural population than for industrial workers such as fitters and mechanics, and also clerical workers, as shown in Table III.

* Maps in the Report of the Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas (pp. 6 and 7) demonstrate the depopulation of nearly all parts of rural England and Wales in the pre-war years. The greatest increases were around London, and near Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. The most disturbing map (p. 6) shows how the greater part of this expansion was made on good agricultural land.

† Cf. Ashby (1935), pp. 9-10. These differences of age and sex between the total urban and rural populations are growing smaller. See also Kiser (1942) on urban-rural fertility rates in America.

‡ It is to be hoped that the Family Limitation Study of the Royal Commission on Population, published in January 1950, will be used to throw light on this question.

* Op. cit., p. 107. He has calculated death-rates on a "standard population with a fixed age and sex distribution, because country districts contain a larger proportion of persons of the sex and ages most liable to fatal disease than the towns."

TABLE III

MORTALITY OF MALES IN THE PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS FROM THE MAIN CAUSES OF DEATH—ENGLAND AND WALES 1930-2

Occupation Group	Social Class	Census Population	All Causes	Standardised Mortality Ratio among Males aged 20-65 from					
				Heart Diseases	Cancer (all sites)	Cerebral Vascular Lesions	Bronchitis and Pneumonia	Respiratory Tuberculosis	Suicide
Farmers and their relatives	II	253,000	73	76	73	68	50	35	142
Agricultural and gardeners' labourers ...	IV, V	414,000	71	68	77	59	66	51	84
Coal hewers and getters	III	405,000	113	109	98	112	128	84	85
Fitters, mechanics, tool-makers, etc.	III	323,000	100	95	102	107	93	102	94
Road transport—motor drivers	III	348,000	80	75	86	66	77	78	68
Typists and other clerks, not in the Civil Service	III	496,000	101	102	101	112	82	120	107
All males		11,342,000	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The standardised mortality ratio expresses the mortality in the occupation as a percentage of the mortality of all males from the same cause

[From figures compiled by the Institute of Social Medicine, Oxford]

In 1924 an important inquiry into the health of urban and rural school children was made by the Board of Education. Nearly 10,000 children in twenty-two counties were inspected, and about one-fifth were found to "suffer from impaired physique"—many of these being in the almost derelict and deserted villages in some parts of Devon, Anglesey and Lincoln; here the children were definitely below the physical standard of urban children. The final overall conclusion, however, was that the rural children are as a whole still physically ahead of the urban children, though not so much ahead as was formerly the case. We must remember that this inquiry came at a black period in agricultural history.

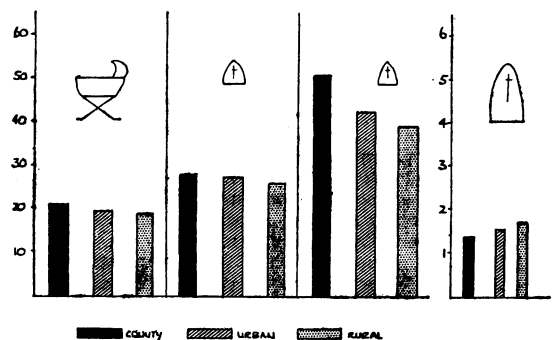
Stillbirths and Infant Mortality-Rates

The most recent figures on physical health I have been able to find are compiled from the Statistical Review of the Registrar-General* (Table IV) and from a study by

Dr. W. J. Martin (1949) from the records of the medical examinations of young male recruits in 1939. The first shows the contrast

TABLE IV
STATISTICAL REVIEW OF THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1945-7 (H.M.S.O.)

	Birth-rate per 1,000 of population	Stillbirth-rate per 1,000 total births	Infant Mortality per 1,000 live births	Maternal Death-rate per 1,000 live and stillbirths
County boroughs 20'84		27.27	50.90	1.37
Urban districts 19.34		27.03	42.26	1.50
Rural districts 18.74		25.72	38.65	1.69



* By the kindness of the Institute of Social Medicine, Oxford. The author's thanks are due to Dr. Russell and Dr. Sutherland.

between county boroughs (the big cities), urban districts (towns) and rural districts for stillbirths, infant mortality and maternal death-rate. The lower stillbirth-rate and infant mortality-rate for the rural districts are highly significant; while the slightly higher maternal mortality-rate probably partly reflects the better clinical and hospital care which urban mothers receive.

In Table V we see what Dr. Martin calls "statistical support for the age-old belief that the countryman is on the average superior in health and physique," and that the small-town man has an advantage over the metropolitan citizen. The rural youth of 20-21 is just over $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb. heavier than his city contemporary. Martin suggests that this may be due to greater height. The rural average for height is three-tenths of an inch taller, and the chest circumference three-tenths of an inch larger. The town youths have slightly smaller chests than the city youths. The most striking contrast is in eyesight. The county boroughs had 10.6 per cent fewer men with perfect vision than the rural districts. Another important contrast is in the percentage of those in medical Category 1—the normal standard of health and strength; 84 per cent of boys from rural districts attained this standard and only 81.4 per cent from the towns and 80 per cent from the large cities. (It is encouraging to compare these figures, even though they deal with the first call-up, with the "C3" results of medical tests during the 1914 war, when

only between 31 per cent and 55 per cent reached Category 1 in the final call-up in some districts.)

Discussion

I think we are safe in drawing the conclusion that the general health and vitality of the rural population is certainly equal, and perhaps superior, to that of urban people. Except in the poorest rural districts (where health statistics, taken in isolation, may be worse than the most congested towns*) the *innate* health is perhaps the same. The countryman's advantage may be environmental—fresh air, outdoor work, absence of noise and hurry all playing their part.

As housing and sanitary and working conditions improve in both town and country it is reasonable to suppose that the health standards of both will improve and approximate each other. At any rate, the city is still very close to the country biologically.† It is probable that during the time of peak migration from the country around 1880 there *was* selection in many districts. The question is whether this continued long enough to be a lasting influence, and if not whether rural society is still healthy enough both to maintain itself and to send some of its best to the cities. Far more research is needed, for during this century many new elements have appeared, such as urban unemployment in the place of agricultural unemployment, the transfer of light industry to country districts, and the changed agricultural and housing policies of the Government.‡

TABLE V
THE PHYSIQUE OF YOUNG ADULT MALES
W. S. MARTIN. LONDON (H.M.S.O., 1949)

	COUNTY BOROUGHs.	URBAN DISTRICTS	RURAL DISTRICTS
WEIGHT IN POUNDS	133.8 \pm 0.10	135.9 \pm 0.11	137.4 \pm 0.19
HEIGHT IN INCHES	67.3 \pm 0.02	67.5 \pm 0.02	67.6 \pm 0.03
CHEST CIRCUMFERENCE IN INCHES	35.5 \pm 0.01	35.4 \pm 0.01	35.8 \pm 0.02
PER CENT WITH 6/6 OR BETTER IN BOTH EYES	62.6	67.5	73.2
PER CENT IN MEDICAL CATEGORY I	80.1	81.4	84.0

MENTAL QUALITY

If we turn from physical quality—a fairly straightforward subject—to mental quality we enter a field where angels fear to tread.

* Cf. Morris and Titmuss (1942). They find that mortality from juvenile rheumatism increases with density of population and with poverty. The depressed rural districts returned rates as high as the worst in the large cities. Rheumatism is known to be high among older farm people, but this may be due more to the damp walls of overcrowded cottages than to innate causes.—B. S. B.

† Cf. Ashby (1939), pp. 18 and 19.

‡ Cf. *Scotland's Changing Population* (1946), especially articles by J. C. Kyd and T. B. Manson.

W. H. Hudson wrote in 1910 that the agricultural labourer was the "healthiest and sanest man in the land, if not also the happiest."* As we have seen, he may well be the healthiest; he is also probably saner than the industrial labourer. Whether he is happier is a question we must leave till later.

Mental Disease

To take the least controversial points first, let us examine the evidence on mental disease and feeble-mindedness. First, insanity: It is fairly well known that urban rates of insanity are higher than rural.† Standards of certification are probably different in cities and in rural areas. Most of the psychoses among rural patients are associated with physical conditions, i.e. the senile psychoses, mental deficiency, Huntington's chorea and cerebral arteriosclerosis, and especially the wearing-out process that comes with old age. Urban psychoses are associated with alcohol, drugs and syphilitic infection.‡ The high suicide-rate for farmers, shown in Table III, reveals the strain under which many of them live. It is doubtful whether farming selects nervous types, though this is possible to some extent and deserves study.

In America in 1910 the commitment-rate per 100,000 urban population was 86, as compared with 41.1 for the rural—over twice as high. In 1933 these rates were 106 and 60.7 for urban and rural males; and 75.8 and 41.4 for urban and rural females.§ Professor Landis, commenting on these figures, says that the high rates of urban insanity may be due partly to the age factor (rural areas having more children, who are not affected by insanity) and by the fact that the foreign-born, who generally have a higher insanity rate than the native Americans, tend to congregate in cities. The evidence in favour of the sanity of the rural population, in both America and England, is fairly clear.

* *A Shepherd's Life*, p. 40.

† See Glass (1935). Mayer-Gross (1948) found a rate of 19 per 1,000 for neurotics and psychopaths, and 3.5 per 1,000 for psychotics.

‡ Cf. Dayton (1940), p. 382.

§ Landis (1948), p. 110, quoting U.S. Bureau of Census.

Mental Deficiency

When we turn from mental disease to mental deficiency the balance is on the other side. I need not describe the investigation by Dr. Lewis, published as the Wood Report in 1929. He calculated from his inquiries in three urban and three rural areas that the incidence of mental deficiency in England and Wales in 1925 was 6.7 per 1,000 in urban, and 10.5 per 1,000 in rural areas.* Sir Cyril Burt (1946) estimates, on the basis of the higher rate of survival due to better care of defectives in 1927, that this represents a rough increase of 1.2 per 1,000 for urban rates and 3 per 1,000 for rural rates over the findings of the Royal Commission in 1907. Dr. Lewis in his evidence for the Royal Commission on Population, commenting on the fact that the incidence of mental defect was almost 50 per cent higher in the country than in the town, says:

In each of the six areas we investigated we found that the mentally defective were very unevenly distributed. In the rural areas many small villages had several defectives whilst in others there were none. In the towns the large majority of defectives resided in slum areas. . . . In parenthesis, I may add that our findings give a denial to any sweeping generalization that rusticity is synonymous with mental inferiority. The level of intelligence in some villages, judged by results obtained with group tests given to the school children, compared very favourably with that of urban populations. In these rural districts it seems that the more intelligent members have resisted the attractions of the towns and that the less intelligent and efficient members have been forced to seek occupation elsewhere.—*Papers of the Royal Commission on Population*, Vol. V. 1950.

Dr. Lewis stresses the importance of the borderline cases; socially and genetically the marriage of the dull girl to the dull boy is more significant than the number of idiots in any community.

In a paper read before the *Eugenics Society* almost exactly two years ago Dr. Mayer-Gross (1948) reported a mental health survey in an agricultural area in the Scottish lowlands towards the end of the war. This was a district which had suffered heavily from the

* Report of the Mental Deficiency Committee (1929), Pt. II, p. 82.

rural exodus of the past two generations.* I will recall to you his findings which bear directly on our subject: Nine per cent of the total population were found to be "abnormal," under nine diagnostic subdivisions. The rate of incidence of mental deficiency was 15.6 per 1,000, which is a third greater than that found by Dr. Lewis in 1927. Many in this group were living under bad conditions, but were fairly content and adapted to their low standard of life. Dr. Mayer-Gross sounds "a sombre note of peaceful gloom" when describing the large number of borderline cases, especially among the children, and he makes an eloquent plea for better conditions.

In America, also, the evidence points to the conclusion that rural areas have a higher proportion of mental defectives than the cities, despite figures showing higher commitment rates for urban areas. One reason is again the age factor, mental defect showing itself in children, and the death-rates among amentals being high. Landis (1948) points out that rural families are more likely than city families to let their moron children run at large, and he cites the moron commitment-rates as evidence. These rates are much lower for the country than for the cities.† Evidently the farms shelter their morons at home better than the cities and provide simple tasks better suited to their abilities. More evidence is provided by the percentage of urban and rural American draftees in the first world war: 1.5 per cent of the urban and 3.9 per cent of the rural men were rejected because of "mental defectiveness."

There is not space to discuss other factors connected with mental quality—alcoholism, vice and juvenile delinquency. Certainly indications are that the rates of incidence are higher in the cities than in the country.

Davies' (1931) conclusion on the whole question of mental abnormality is worth quoting:

It seems that the incidence of mental abnormality tends to increase as population approaches

* *Op. cit.* In this Scottish district there were in 1931 7,000 more people over 65 and 45,000 less under 20 than there had been in 1871.

† *Ibid.*, p. 111. See also Sorokin, Zimmerman and Galpin, Vol. 3 (1932), p. 240.

either of the two extremes of excessive density or excessive sparsity, while it is lowest in a mean or normal population. In this case it would appear that rural-urban migration has been a factor of very great importance in the causation of mental deficiency, both rural and urban, not necessarily by draining away the best stocks from the countryside but by depleting it of its normal proportion of population, while at the same time overcrowding the towns.—(*loc. cit.*, p. 147).

This question of the interplay between quantity and quality in a population is one deserving much study, but is beyond the scope of this paper. Our conclusion must be that the rate of mental deficiency is higher in those rural districts which have been surveyed than in the cities. Studies of other rural districts are needed before general conclusions can be drawn.

Intelligence

And now we come to intelligence, the thorniest problem of all. I will not attempt to go into the question of definition, or into the history of the nature-nurture controversy, now nearly two generations old. I cannot do better than to quote Sir Cyril Burt (1946):

... the inheritability of tested intelligence is remarkably like that of stature. The measurable height of a child may be reduced by illness or malnutrition, particularly during infancy; but that does not obscure the fact that the main determining influence, especially when all are brought up in favourable conditions, is still the individual's inborn constitution. And the same holds good of the measurements obtained by intelligence tests.

Suffice it to say that certain tests are now accepted as useful tools in skilled hands, for specific purposes, and for the classification of children within certain groups. When groups differ greatly in background the question arises: does the measuring instrument favour one group more than the other? For our purposes, do the tests favour the city children?

American Studies of Rural Intelligence

This question has been debated more frequently in America, with its racial problems, than in Britain. American rural conditions differ widely from British; if I were

asked to cite some of them I would hazard the following: First, the American rural population is far more mobile than the British; there is an army of migrant workers, and even among stable families there is a habit of "moving on"; second, the American educational system is more uniform and democratic even than the British; this affects test comparisons in the over-14 age group more than in the primary grades; third, the class system is more "open," both occupationally and socially, and this affects the "pull" from the cities; fourth, the farming structure is different; for instance, the landlord-tenant system is hardly comparable to the British system; land ownership does not have the same traditional meaning, and tenancy is merely a step in the farming ladder.* Broadly speaking, it is easier for an able young man to get land and set up as a farmer in the United States than in England. Bearing these differences in mind let us examine some of the studies that came in such spate during the 'twenties and early 'thirties. Sorokin, Zimmerman and Galpin (1931 and 1932) summarize the results of sixty-five such studies—I shall not do that! In general, the country children were slower and, therefore, did less well on any tests dependent on speed. An early school survey (Works, 1922) found that country children were equal to city children in arithmetic, but deficient in other subjects. This brings up the vast and important matter of rural education, which can only be touched upon here. Roughly speaking, the American surveys have shown that the rural schools in the regions studied are inferior to urban schools, the city children being approximately one year ahead of the country children. The urban superiority varied in direct proportion as "demands made by the tests called for special school instruction as opposed to general powers which the school can do little to make or mar" (Chapman and Eby (1920)). To illustrate this, here is a story quoted by Blackburn (1948):

A Kentucky mountain boy was being given the Stanford-Binet test. "If you bought 6 cents' worth of candy and gave the storekeeper 10 cents, how much change would you receive?" The boy answered, "I never had 10 cents, and if I had I wouldn't spend it on candy, and anyway candy is what mother makes." The examiner, not to be downed, improvised: "If you had taken ten cows to pasture for your father, and six of them strayed away, how many would you have left to drive home?" The answer came quickly: "We done' have ten cows, but if we did, and I lost six, I wouldn't dare go home." The examiner tried again: "If there were ten children in your school and six of them were home with measles, how many would there be in school?" The boy said, "None, because the rest would be afraid of catching it too."

That boy was not stupid, but he might have been rated as a moron on the Binet scale.

An interesting American approach is a study in Iowa on children from birth to 16 years (Baldwin and Fillmore (1928)), which points up the influence of environment. The authors found that

when matched with city children the rural infants show no noticeable differences; the rural pre-school children show some inferiority at the upper ages, and the rural school children show . . . increasing retardation . . . especially in language ability. . . . They show superiority on certain (performance) tests that probably relate to their experiences, but they have a slower rate of action.

The fact that the rural babies up to about three accredited themselves as well as their city contemporaries leads the authors to suggest that, among other causes, the fewer books and pictures in rural homes may account for some of the inferiority of older rural children.

In 1929 Shimberg made an investigation to examine the hypothesis of the unfairness of tests. Believing that intelligence tests are to some extent information tests she constructed two scales of twenty-five general information questions, one based on town experience (Test A), the other on rural (Test B). Test A ranged in difficulty from "What are the colours of the American flag?" to "What is a referendum in government?" Test B began with "Of what is butter made?" and ended with "How can you locate the Pole star?" After careful

* A comparison between the British and American smallholdings movements would be of great interest; also a study of the different types of well-paid farm jobs in each country.

standardization each scale was given to large groups of urban and rural school children in the State of New York. On Test A (the urban scale) the rural group was found to be a year retarded, on Test B (the rural questions) the position was reversed, indeed the urban children were slightly more than a year retarded. Shimberg concludes, not unnaturally, that ordinary intelligence tests do not "fit" rural children as well as they do urban; that the country children are *different*, not inferior.*

Jones, Conrad and Blanchard (1932) have made an important study in which they "analysed the effect of restricted environment on the separate mental operations in the Binet test." Space does not permit a full summary,† but here are their conclusions, somewhat condensed :

... a rural child moving to the city would increase his intelligence-test scores, merely as a result of changed environmental conditions. The rural child ... is handicapped ... in linguistic information ... in speed ... and in adaptation to test situations. The handicap is specific, not general; ... sometimes transitory, but more often cumulative. ... It would be unsafe, however, to infer that the *average* retardation of rural children is chiefly due to environmental factors. The quantitative relations cannot be stated on the basis of the present evidence, but the most likely estimate would be that about half of the average difference of 10 points I.Q. is attributable to factors other than those derived from social and educational environment. ...

Professor Raymond Cattell wrote to the author in January from Illinois, and said, with regard to urban-rural migration :

The evidence seems to be that normally the children of brighter I.Q. tend to migrate to the really big cities somewhat more than those of lower I.Q. ... The country areas seem to *start* with a somewhat lower distribution of I.Q. and this does not seem to be entirely accountable for by differences of efficiency of schooling. They then tend somewhat to lose the brighter I.Q.s. ... On the other hand, there is an opposite trend of migration during the time of agricultural slump, when it seems that it is the less successful, and probably, therefore, the less able, who migrate to the cities. Whether these occa-

sional heavy migrations through slump are sufficient to offset the endemic trend in the opposite direction is anyone's guess.

To conclude this brief survey of American studies may I quote two other opinions : Frederick Osborn (1940), summarizing a discussion of studies on racial and regional groups, says :

Differences in hereditary potentials for intelligence are widely scattered in different family lines throughout the whole population. In order to sort them out with any accuracy it will be necessary to equalize or allow for environmental conditions affecting the development of intelligence.—(p. 99).

Professor Landis (1948) ends his discussion of rural innate ability thus :

The *effective intelligence* of rural students, as measured by their ability to make satisfactory adjustments (in college) is apparently as high as that of urban students. This would seem to be a more valid basis for drawing rural-urban comparisons than performance on psychological tests. ... That farm people have almost universally been placed lower than urban groups in intelligence testing may be of some significance, but interpretations must be carefully qualified, for the tests as ordinarily used are not a safe method of arriving at an index of population quality.—(*Op. cit.*, p. 106).

British Studies of Rural Intelligence

And now we turn to the British rural population again—so much more homogeneous and stable, and yet just as complicated. Again the overall picture of past and recent studies reveals lower average rural scores on intelligence tests, but some high scores in remote districts. In 1919 Bickersteth (1919) tested children in the Yorkshire Dales and in Leeds. The Dales children were better in memory tests, the Leeds children in reasoning. This last was tested by the Burt analogy test (policeman : burglar ; cat : —), and the answers would presumably be easier for children with urban background.

Gray and Marsden (1922) also tested a small group of children in the Yorkshire Dales in 1923, and concluded, "The country children examined are, as a group, more intelligent than *some* town classes we tested. ... " The famous studies with the Northumberland mental tests by Professor Godfrey

* Shimberg (1929), p. 52 ; also cf. Smith (1927) and Shaler (1930).

† For this see Schwesinger (1933), pp. 295-7.

Thomson, published in 1921 (Thomson 1921, Duff and Thomson 1923) found the rural children more than a year behind those in the large cities. Some of the children in the remote Cheviot valleys were found to have high intelligence, and Professor Thomson suggests this may be in part due to these districts being "too remote to be drained by selection to the cities."

This is borne out by a study in the West Riding of Yorkshire under the auspices of the Board of Education in 1924. "Mental tests" were applied in sixteen urban and rural elementary schools, and the results showed:

... in the rural schools the most noticeable feature is the greater range in the distribution of intelligence.... The villages where a disproportionate number of... backward children were found were... mainly villages near a port or city—villages, that is to say, from which the brighter families had already migrated. Other villages, however, in a similar situation showed a disproportionate number of bright and average children; in such cases it was found that the less intelligent families had moved to the large industrial centres owing to the demand for unskilled labourers; while on the other hand the village itself offered a desirable place of resi-

dence for better families, such as skilled artisans and professional people.—*Psychological Tests of Educable Capacity*, 1924 (p. 156).

In 1937 Dr. Raymond Cattell published his book *The Fight for Our National Intelligence*, which did much to rouse public opinion about the differential birth-rate. He applied a specially made non-verbal group test to 3,734 10-year-old school children in Leicester city and in rural Devonshire, and obtained figures from which he estimated the following declines in I.Q. in a generation: 3.1 for the urban area; 3.3 for the rural. He also estimated "approximately a 30 per cent increase in mental deficiency," and that the very able country children had been cut down by half. This, not surprisingly, he calls a "galloping plunge towards intellectual bankruptcy." Sir Cyril Burt (1946), commenting on these estimates, says that this alleged plunge, if true, would have aroused comment from school teachers and educational officials (and, I might add, employers—some of whom, indeed, have complained of lowered efficiency). Sir Cyril goes on to explain the divergence between Cattell's and his own estimates for the decline of the I.Q.

TABLE VI

DISTRIBUTION OF INTELLIGENCE IN THE URBAN AREA

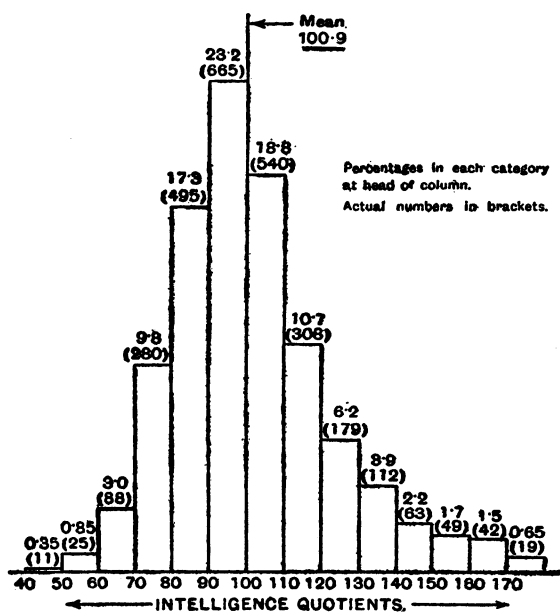
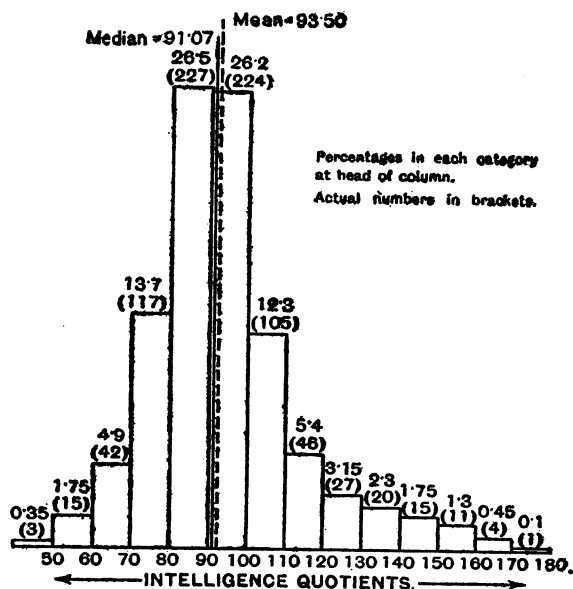


TABLE VII

DISTRIBUTION OF INTELLIGENCE IN THE RURAL AREA



(1.5 urban, 2.0 rural) by citing differences in the tests and in the sampling.*

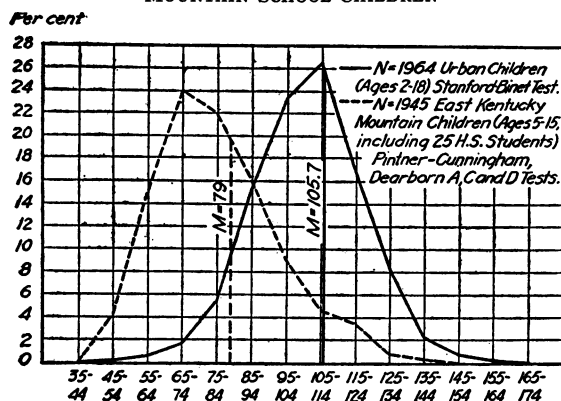
Tables VI and VII show Cattell's scores for the rural and urban children, giving the spread of intelligence in both groups.

The greatest contrasts lie between the 80-90 and the 100-110 I.Q. groups; but the rural children show significantly lower scores in all the I.Q. groups except between 90-100.

By way of comparison, Table VIII gives curves by Hirsch on Kentucky mountain children, and by Terman and Merrill on urban children in America.† The greater difference in the averages reflects the greater contrast in environment. Actually the mountain children appear to have been a normal group for their environment.

TABLE VIII

DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES IN INTELLIGENCE TESTS
MADE BY AMERICAN URBAN AND EAST KENTUCKY
MOUNTAIN SCHOOL CHILDREN



To swing from the Kentucky mountains to the mountains of Scotland, two studies made before the war are worthy of notice. Mowat (1938) studied city and rural schools in Scotland and found that the differences of ability between schools were less in the country than

in towns. He suggested as an explanation that in Scotland a greater variety of social classes go to rural schools; in the cities the classes are more segregated. The higher scores were found in the small (rural) and in the large (urban) schools rather than in medium-sized ones. He suggests that the children benefit from more individual attention in the small schools and from the better organization in the large ones; or that perhaps the "drain to the towns of better stock" has left remoter districts more or less untapped, so that the small school "way out" has brighter children. He also raises an interesting query about occupational intelligence. "Intelligence is demanded of shepherds, small farmers and signalmen," and perhaps the parents' occupations influence the I.Q. of the children. It is well known that the children of professional parents score the highest on intelligence tests; but do urban, industrial and clerical occupations really demand higher intelligence than rural work in general? Real evidence on this question could have been obtained by comparisons of evacuees and country children in the rural schools during the war. I have not been able to find a single such study.

In 1939 Macmeeken studied the intelligence of a representative group of Scottish children with Binet and Performance tests, and found "no evidence of inferiority of rural to urban children in level of intelligence..." though "in interpreting this we must remember that a remarkable uniformity has been achieved in Scotland, where 99.7 per cent of the teachers are trained." (p. 46).

Evidence from an English education authority which has done research with Moray House intelligence tests shows definitely lower scores for its rural children. In 1947 the University of Hull inquiry in two different counties (Perkins, 1947), one south-west and one north-east, found mean scores for urban children of:

101.7 (S.D. 13.1)
105.67 (S.D. 15.04)

* Professor Ashby [(1939) and personal interview] criticises Cattell's findings on rural intelligence by maintaining that rural birth-rates have never been sufficient to account for "the country supplying the cities with its better men." He asks what evidence Cattell has for saying that some villages with high intelligence have been "untapped by the towns." If this were true these villages would have grown into small towns. Finally he doubts whether the tests used measure inborn capacity.

† Osborn (*op. cit.*, p. 73).

* See also Russell (1930) and Macdonald (1925).

for semi-rural children of :

100·1 (S.D. 13·6)

100·64 (S.D. 14·3)

and for rural children :

97·3 (S.D. 13·1)

98·9 (S.D. 13·76)

Clearly the urban children were fairly superior to the semi-rural ones, especially in the north-east county, and very superior to the rural children. The author comments :

The distributions were similar and seemed to support the theory that children in rural surroundings develop at a slower rate than in urban ones. Village children evidently included a number who were thoroughly well able to follow a grammar-school curriculum provided they had been sufficiently well equipped with the two essential skills. Having reached the desirable level under less favourable circumstances than their town-bred fellows their claims should receive the fullest consideration.

The author adds that war camps and factories had brought an "infusion of brighter children" into rural communities. The proportion of dull children in the rural areas was more than twice that in the towns. The proportion of children with scores of 130 or over was different in the two counties, but equally small for rural children :

	Urban	Semi-rural	Rural
	%	%	%
S.W. County ...	27 (1·8)	10 (2·6)	14 (1·1)
N.E. County ...	35 (5·3)	4 (1·8)	3 (1·1)

And now we come to the latest and most important of all British intelligence surveys—that carried out in 1947 by the Scottish Mental Survey Committee (Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1949), of which Professor Sir Godfrey Thomson is chairman. The comparison with the famous 1932 survey (Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1932) was described to this Society last October by Sir Godfrey himself. Here I will give some unpublished figures, which he and Mr. James Maxwell have kindly permitted me to quote : The children from the four cities (27,422 eleven-year-olds) had a mean test score of 37·156 (S.D. 16·10). The children from nineteen other education authorities, whose areas are almost entirely

rural (12,551 eleven-year-olds) had average test scores of 35·754 (S.D. 16·22). The difference of 1·4 points is statistically significant. The average score for all Scotland is 36·688 (S.D. 16·05). Evidently if there were children with high scores from some of the remote rural districts they could not pull up the rural average, which is almost a point below the total average. It would be interesting to try rural-urban information scales on these children, such as Shimberg used.

Sir Godfrey has also allowed me to quote some results from the English survey, which is being conducted by Mr. Emmett, and which shows fairly wide variations in urban and rural intelligence. As a whole the urban children are brighter than the rural by 4·07 points of I.Q. Within two very rural almost pastoral counties the children in the smaller urban districts are significantly superior to the rural children. In three agricultural counties each containing large urban areas and backgrounds of extensive mixed farming the children in the smaller urban districts are significantly superior to those in the county boroughs (the big cities). In one of these counties, with many small family farms specializing in dairying, the rural children are significantly superior to those in a dockyard sea-coast town. In another of these counties, also very rural, with mixed farming, the country children are significantly inferior to those in a large industrial city. In the third of these counties there is only a slight and insignificant difference between the rural children and those of a large industrial and shipping area. The lowest I.Q.s occurred in another sea-coast town, and the total rural children were brighter than these by 1·05 points. The urban children from the smaller towns (one an ancient cathedral and market town) were brighter than the sea-coast town children by 5·12 points.

Discussion of American and British Studies

A summary of this brief survey of the more important American and British urban-rural comparisons yields no broad conclusion. Faced with such a diversity of results, what

can we deduce? The two main questions in the field of intelligence testing were: "Do the tests favour the city children?" and "Are most of the abler children now living in the towns due to selective migration by their forbears?" The answer to the first question is, I think, a partial yes; but final judgment must be reserved until more work has been done on such matters as "test sophistication" and the influence of specific and general elements in the home and school environments.* Professor P. E. Vernon, who coined the term "test sophistication," is engaged on research into the intelligence of army recruits in various parts of the country. The results of the Hollerith analysis will give important information on rural, semi-rural and urban test performance. His conclusions, together with those of the Scottish and English surveys, will be of great interest.

Sir Frederic Bartlett has suggested ways of minimizing environmental influence, such as testing the rate of improvement, or finding a way by which "significant limits" of intelligence differences could be equated for different groups.† (Efforts made in the 'twenties to find a "universal test," free of all environmental influence, have not had much success.‡)

The answer to the second question is more difficult, as we have seen. If the tests used in rural-urban comparisons *do* favour the city children to some extent, how much does this account for the lower rural scores which have been found almost universally in both England and America? The debate on selective migration really hangs on the answer. We have seen that Jones, Conrad and Blanchard consider that only half the difference in rural-urban I.Q.s is attributable to environment. A similar research in England would be valuable, as would a study planned on the same lines as Shimberg's.

* Cf. Schwesinger (1933, Chapter IV) for an able and comprehensive discussion of environmental influence.

† Cf. his introduction to Blackburn (1948). For earlier discussions of this question, see Schieffelin and Schwesinger (1930), pp. 42-51.

‡ E.G. Dodd (1926). It has been found again and again that non-verbal tests, even those with pantomime instructions, do not eliminate the language element; nor do they escape specific culture factors, such as the child's reaction to the test situation.

Need for Further Research

The importance of the I.Q. in any assessment of all-round quality may itself be debated. There must, of course, be a basic average of general ability, below which no society is efficient; but does a difference of 2-4 points on, say, the Moray House intelligence tests constitute a drop below such an average? This is a vital question and needs far more thought than it has received from the experts in mental testing. It brings up a whole complex of questions. Should tests be standardized separately for groups varying too much in background? Can temperament and character be measured? If the social and biological backgrounds cannot be untwined, can their respective contributions be estimated?

Another rich field of inquiry is the distribution of rural intelligence. The percentages of bright and dull children, and the possible connection between family strains and racial origins, may be more important than the average scores of groups. American sociologists seem to have concluded that intelligence is more diversified in the cities than in the country,* and this is at variance with most British findings. It probably reflects in part the difference between American and British conditions, but it would repay study. Last, but not least, the question of the greater incidence of mental defect in country districts needs far more investigation. Is there any connection between feeble-mindedness and too great or too little density of population?

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

A paper such as this can hardly result in any one conclusion. We have seen that standards of health and intelligence vary with the shift of economic forces in both town and country. On the physical level the innate urban quality is probably much the same as the rural. On the mental level urban environment seems to make for earlier development and to call forth different abilities—alertness and speed, for instance,

* Cf. Davies (1931), p. 167.

as against persistence and thoroughness.* The proper comparison between town and country is in terms of differences, not of superiorities.

Special Qualities of the Countryman

The special character of the countryman has been the subject of many books. At its simplest it reveals itself in the instinctive wisdom, stability and balance of the rural worker. The country boy of 14 who scores lower than his town contemporary may well, at 30, become an abler worker, more skilled and reliable, and with better qualities as parent and citizen, than the same town boy turned factory worker. Sir Horace Plunkett does not hesitate in saying that the countryman's "intellectual slowness is really . . . engendered by the slow processes of nature . . . his thought is larger, nearer to the realities of life, than that of the city dweller, his work is more dignified and thorough."† Sir George Stapledon calls the attributes of a good landsman "self-reliance, self-sufficiency . . . endurance."‡ The farm worker of to-day is in many ways more skilful than his ancestors. He may not be so good with animals, but he is learning the intricacies of tractor engines, of grassland management and of efficient crop production.§ His employer the farmer needs, besides these abilities, inventiveness and foresight. He must be aware of processes which the townsman can more safely ignore. Such a simple thing as the placing of a haystack means weighing the pros and cons of weather and transport many months ahead. The mating of a cow to-day will influence milk production four years hence. In forestry the cycle may be eighty years.

These qualities of the countryman were recognized during the war in each branch of the services. Both naval and army officers have told the writer that they could always

recognize the countryman among the ratings or recruits, and that after training they were the ones who usually got the stiff assignments. The villages and small towns provided more officer material, in proportion to their numbers, than did the big cities. These traits of stability and leadership seem to be fostered by a rural or semi-rural environment.* They may depend more on the home and school than on genetic factors, true; but it is the interaction of biological and social heredity that is important, and this interaction takes place in the home and school. As rural housing and education improve we may see improvement in mental "quality" which will lay once and for all the bogey of rural inferiority. Many a country doctor will testify already to the improved health and "intelligence" of village families who have been rehoused.† And the same could be said of the children who have had the best type of rural schooling.

Farming, fishing, forestry and the other rural industries call for great skills, and these skills are becoming increasingly important to Britain. Certainly many people capable of these skills have been driven from the countryside in the past, but there is evidence that this is being corrected. As agriculture becomes more efficient it may need fewer workers, but it is all the more essential that those workers be of good quality. The old association between agriculture and industry is being restored in a new form, as is shown by the Government's attitude toward the decentralization of industry, the stabilizing of farm prices and the encouragement of small holdings; towards rural housing, transport, water and electricity. There is ample latent strength and ability among the rural population and a growing self-confidence. The rural worker is far more apt than the industrial worker to feel that he is doing a vital job, that he is not just a cog in a machine. During the dark days of farming

* Landis (1948) enlarges on this: "... alertness has survival value in the city; but steady persistence may be equally important in the country. . . ."

† Cf. Holdenby (1913). Introduction.

‡ *Sunday Times*, January 23rd, 1949.

§ This view was forcibly expressed in a letter to the author by Mr. G. B. Newe, Regional Organiser to the Northern Ireland Council of Social Service.

* Cf. Gee (1937).

† There could hardly be a more dramatic contrast than that between the modern Rural District Council house, with its good kitchen, bathroom, living and bedrooms, and the "improved cottage" of a century ago—which was itself such a striking advance over the hovels of past centuries.

the countryman was decidedly not the "happiest man in the land"; but his importance to the nation is at last being recognized, and his belief in his own destiny is reviving.

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B. S. B.

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